



FOREVER WILD



Newsletter of Friends of Baxter State Park

Spring 2021

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Executive Director's Column

by Aaron Megquier

Many of us are familiar with the story of Baxter State Park and how it was created. Percival Baxter's legacy of a lifetime is one of the most powerful and compelling stories in the history of American land conservation. But the story of Katahdin – and of the land surrounding it that is now Baxter State Park – is much longer and older. It is also a story that is not ours to tell.

Wabanaki people have been part of the story of Baxter State Park and Katahdin for millennia. The Park is located on the ancestral homeland of the Penobscot Nation. Penobscots have lived in the Park for thousands of years – hunting moose, gathering plant medicines, and traveling the rivers and streams. What we call wilderness, the Penobscots simply call home. Wabanaki people have cared for the Park with respect and reciprocity for hundreds of generations, including the last five centuries of genocide and European colonization.

Our cover story in this issue features part one of an excellent essay by Maria Girouard on the relationship between Wabanaki people and Katahdin. Girouard is a historian, member of the Penobscot Nation, and the Executive Director of Wabanaki REACH. She delivered this essay as the keynote presentation at the 2008 annual meeting of Friends of Baxter State Park. Her stories – some ancient, some contemporary – make it clear that the Wabanaki relationship to the Park is not simply history, it is current events.

Please stay tuned for the second half of this essay in the upcoming summer issue of *Forever Wild*. We are so grateful to Maria for sharing her knowledge with us and for allowing us to share it with you.



K'taadn, the sacred mountain of the Wabanaki, rises above the surrounding landscape from a vantage point near Abol Pond.
– Photo © Ardis Hacker

Wabanaki and K'taadn: A History and a Future

By Maria Girouard

The Wabanaki Indians of today still nurture a spiritual relationship between themselves and the mystical mountain of Maine: K'taadn. This relationship is as deeply rooted in their existence as K'taadn is to the Earth from which it rises. Through legends, history, personal accounts, and song, the story of this sacred relationship between the Wabanaki Indians of Maine and K'taadn evolves presenting evidence of a spiritual relationship that is and was infused in Wabanaki identity and culture since time immemorial. For those who have not had the pleasure of meeting this Great Mountain, a formal introduction is in order.

"K'taadn" was given its name by the indigenous people of Maine. There are a number of translation variations for the word K'taadn, but the meanings are similar. The infamous naturalist, Henry David Thoreau writes that K'taadn is "an Indian word" signifying highest land. It has been literally translated to mean "Great Mountain." The "K'ta" having a meaning of "greatness." Another interpretation of the word K'taadn cannot be translated literally, but means someone that is old and venerable, such as an elder male or leader in a family.

There are no surrounding foothills to precede the presence of K'taadn. It simply juts out majestically from the Maine forest to an elevation of 5,267 feet making K'taadn the highest point in Maine. It is also the first point where the illuminating rays of the rising sun first hit in the North American continent. The honor of receiving the

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Friends of Baxter State Park is a 501(c)(3) organization working to preserve, support, and enhance the wilderness character of Baxter State Park in the spirit of its founder, Percival P. Baxter.



Membership Matters

By Sarah Holland,
 Membership Coordinator

We would like to thank all of you for your generous support during this particularly challenging time. A year ago, Covid-19 threatened our health, forced closures, and caused financial hardships for so many people. We were unsure how it would affect our organization. Thanks to you, we were able to sustain our mission, pivot our programs, and continue to support the Park. If there is strength in numbers, we are coming out stronger than ever. Our membership rolls grew to over 1,400 – an all-time record! We wholeheartedly welcome all our new members and appreciate all our renewing members who came through with flying colors. We invite all of you to become active and engaged.

Normally, as spring approaches, we would be looking forward to seeing you in person at our Annual Meeting, planning the schedule for “Walks in the Park”, and preparing to attend festivals and other events. But, like many of you, we’ve had to change our activities to avoid in-person gatherings. We do hope you will still join us for our virtual Annual Meeting on April 7th, 2021, at 6:00 pm. See page 8 for more information.

Although we are optimistic that the Covid-19 situation will improve later this year, we are not sure when we will return to “normal.” Accordingly, we are working on alternative ways to stay engaged with our members. As part of this effort, we are launching a new video series called “How to Baxter.” Each video will provide information on a different topic relevant to the Park – for example, fly fishing, how to make a reservation, or advice for visiting the Park with kids. Our members will be the first to know each time a new video is released. Please check out our website, subscribe to our Youtube channel, and follow us on Facebook and Instagram for updates. If you have special knowledge about a particular topic and would like to participate in our “How to Baxter” series, please let us know.

But take heart, not everything will be virtual! Assuming that by September we are “out of the

woods” with this pandemic, we will be having an in-person event at Maple Hill Farm in Hallowell to celebrate our 21st Anniversary. Originally planned for 2020, this will be a fun opportunity to show appreciation for our Founders who had the foresight to create Friends of Baxter State Park in 2000. It will be a time to take stock of our accomplishments, look to the future, and unveil some new swag. We will monitor the CDC and State of Maine recommendations to determine if other in-person activities will be possible by the Fall. Meanwhile, let’s be together in spirit by sharing memories, stories, old photos, and experiences in Baxter State Park. We may feature these stories in future newsletters, on our Facebook page, or our website. We have already had some great responses and are looking forward to sharing those with you soon. We’ll get through this together if we all stay “Baxter Strong.”



–Calendar cover photo © Ken Wadness

2021 Baxter State Park Calendars on sale

Our 2021 Baxter State Park calendar is in stock and on sale for just \$10! You can order online at www.friendsofbaxter.org, mail a check to PO Box 322, Belfast, ME 04915, or call (207) 505-5779. All proceeds benefit Friends of Baxter State Park.

Answer: Trivia Question in Fall / Winter Newsletter

In our fall/winter newsletter, we asked “About how many years does a Katahdin summit sign last before it needs to be replaced?” Many thanks to Lester Kenway for his wonderfully instructive answer, which we plan to print in full in an upcoming issue.

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Lori Dana teaches participants in the Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program about plant medicines at Russell Pond in August 2018.

– Photo © Aaron Megquier

day's first rays is the derivative of the Wabanaki name. "Waban" is the period of the day just before daylight. "Aki" means "people of" (referring to a place or thing previously mentioned- in this case, Waban). The gray and pink granite boulders and rocks that comprise the mountain are dated to approximately 400 million years ago making the mountain an infant in terms of mountain years.

To begin to comprehend the relationship between the Wabanaki and the mountain it is first necessary to understand the native worldview that surrounds the legends of K'taadn's creation. The Wabanaki followed a doctrine similar to many indigenous tribes that recognized the presence of spirit in all objects – people, animals, rocks, and trees alike. This spiritual presence brought life to inanimate objects. It recognized the intrinsic value in all creation, and made those objects worthy of respect, acknowledgement, and praise. The spirit of the animals, rocks, and trees, was the "keeper" of these species. Arrogance was to believe that humans were the only ones with a spirit, and the only ones deserving of respect. Native folklore and legends are full of conversations with animals and inanimate objects being referred to in human ways. It is in this manner that K'taadn is considered. It is the "spiritual highlands of the Wabanaki Indians, guarding the empire of Northern Maine."

As Wabanaki oral traditions are intrinsically tied to specific sites, animals, and spirits, there are many Wabanaki legends that are about K'taadn, or that mention the great mountain in them. K'taadn's origins and the spirits in residence are most commonly recounted. The Penobscot legend that addresses the creation of the Great Mountain involves Gluskape, who is a central legendary figure in the Wabanaki oral tradition. He can be considered a trickster, but more importantly, he is considered a great teacher, providing important lie lessons for those receptive to learning. The legend that describes the origin of K'taadn has a handful of characters to remember: K'taadn, Gluskape, Zipsis, Bagugeal, and Medoulin. The legend identifies K'taadn as the name of a pupil of Gluskape, and that K'taadn knew many things. K'taadn's wife was Zipsis. A chief named Badugeal wanted Zipsis for himself. He asked an evil spirit, Medoulin, to help him get Zipsis from K'taadn. Upon hearing this news, K'taadn and his wife Zipsis fled through the thick woods of present-day Maine. They soon realized that the evil spirit, Medoulin, was chasing them so they made an enormous kettle from copper.

They crouched close to the Earth, turned the copper kettle upside down, and hid underneath it. K'taadn and Zipsis managed to deter the evil Medoulin but they remained so long under the copper kettle that dirt and rocks grew on top of the kettle until a mountain formed. That mountain was K'taadn. This is the spirit of K'taadn – a human figure who dwells inside the mountain with his wife, Zipsis.

The mountain has inspired many other stories, especially about Gluskape and the Little People. The Little People, or Mikawasis, as they are called in Penobscot, are believed to be living in the caves "on the other side of the mountain." These Little People are the messengers for the people to Gluskape, and from Gluskape to the people. Some Wabanaki legends contend that Gluskape, enraged by the treachery of the newcomers who had ignored and refused to learn his important lessons on harmonious living, left his people in anger to reside in K'taadn where he will remain until asked by his people to return. Inside the mountain is believed to be the resting place of the great teacher, Gluskape. In a mountain cave, Gluskape resides, holed up, and "fashioning arrowheads for the day in the future where Indians will need him." It is through Gluskape's presence that the mountain is thought to embody the great teachings of the creator and serve as sage to the wisdom seekers.

As the mountain houses the spirit of K'taadn and is the resting place of their great teacher, Gluskape, for a very long time the Wabanaki were reluctant to climb the mountain. K'taadn had always been surrounded by mystery. The Penobscot considered it an unapproachable sacred place, fit for only the gods. Instead of climbing the sacred mountain, the Wabanaki would only travel to K'taadn to become closer to the spirits that lived in the mountain, but avoided the wrath of the spirit most popular in K'taadn legends – Pamola. They did so by maintaining a respectful distance.

Pamola is often times referred to as the Storm bird, as its name is associated with the meaning of thunder, the sound of thunder, or the spirit of thunder. Pamola is not a myth, nor a legend, but a spirit as is K'taadn and Gluskape.

A handwritten story about two Passamaquoddy girls who had an encounter with Pamola describes the spirit who came to them, whistling through the air. They say he was hideous...his face was narrow and very thin of body - his body was only about the span of two hands. His legs were long and spindly and very long was his arms. His mouth was very much like a birds, a sharp, beak-like nose. The interpretation for the word "Pamola" in the Penobscot Dictionary is "he whizzes along at great speed." It is at the top of the Great Mountain that Pamola is believed to roost. Described as a great birdlike creature, Pamola is not extremely hospitable to those who ascend the mountain. In Fanny Eckstorm Hardy's *The Indian Legends of Mount K'taadn*, Pamola is described as being "hideously destructive." It is safe to say that an entire research could be done on the origins, stories, and meanings of Pamola. While many writings on Pamola describe him as evil, hideous, or frightening, it is important to note that native worldview generally does not categorize



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With some extra preparation (involving pre-trip quarantine and testing for all group members), FBSP President Ellen Baum was able to pull off her annual women's ski trip safely in February 2021.
— Photo © Karen Nielsen

President's Column

by Ellen Baum

My oldest son lives in Houston, Texas and got caught in the cold weather and related power outage in February. A few texts, to not drain his phone's power, assured us that he and his family were doing well enough. Only when the worst was behind them did we get a phone call letting us know what "well enough" meant. Turns out you can take a boy out of Maine, but you can't take a northern New England childhood out of the boy.

As a veteran of the 1998 ice storm, where we lost power for ten days, as well as of many shorter outages, he had experienced drawing water from an old dug well, being awake with daylight, and in bed when the sun set. He knew power outage toilet behavior, about filling up buckets and bathtubs with water, where the candles were stored, and to keep the refrigerator door closed as much as possible.

So it was not a surprise that they did "well enough." Of course, he missed having a wood stove, as the temperature in their house plummeted to the low 30s. But they walked their neighborhood to keep warm, checked in on friends and neighbors to be sure they were all right, worried that the water containers they had filled might freeze and break and were relieved when they didn't, and kept an eye out for the inevitable bursting pipes.

It wasn't just growing up in Maine, though, that helped him out. Years of backpacking and summer jobs taking care of AMC backcountry tent sites gave him even more tools and resilience to handle

the elements. It was a relief for us to hear his cheeriness in what was a huge ordeal. And to know that skills were being passed on to our granddaughter.

I'm just back from my annual Baxter women's winter ski trip, which began in the mid-80s when my son was four. There are so many reasons I love this trip: companionship with dear friends (complicated this year by taking COVID tests, then quarantining before the trip), a chance to experience the natural world with so few other distractions, rigorous exercise. This year didn't disappoint. There was some sticky snow but nothing that a handy scraper couldn't handle. And there was the glorious night walk to the outhouse. I also love stripping down to basics, fitting my needs into a backpack.

We direct a lot of attention to how to adapt to warmer climates. But we're seeing that demands for climate resiliency are agnostic about temperature. Frigid weather hit Houston because high temperatures in the Arctic stratosphere in January wobbled the normally tight polar vortex off its axis, blasting frigid air across the prairies and reaching down to southern Texas. This isn't the first time the polar vortex has split, and it won't be the last. It was a more powerful event than usual, resulting in the particularly brutal temperatures, snow, and ice. What we also learned from this storm is that the infrastructures we rely on to protect us are *hmm*, not always reliable. Even though the weather system was predicted, power systems were not prepared.

We have some pretty good ideas about what went wrong with the Texas grid. I imagine there will be some changes there to keep this exact same situation from happening again. But honestly, it's a game of whack-a-mole. I'll bet the farm that there will be many more occasions where weather catastrophes and infrastructure breakdowns converge to cause massive chaos.

I, like so many, was appalled when Tim Boyd, the mayor of Colorado City, Texas, posted on Facebook, "The City and County, along with power providers or any other service, owes you NOTHING!... If you are sitting at home in the cold because you have no power and are sitting there waiting for someone to come rescue you because your lazy is direct result of your raising! [sic].... Only the strong will survive and the weak will parish [sic]."

But there is a grain of truth in the assertion that we need skills to take care of and rescue ourselves because, like it or not, the buck stops at every household. We need to be prepared for weather we don't always want, and for power systems, which should protect us, letting us down.

Outdoor experiences help a lot in building that resiliency. Bringing ourselves, our families, and friends to Baxter and other places in the natural world build the toolbox to "be prepared." It lets skills be passed on from generation to generation to better take these experiences in stride. FBSP does its part. Youth programs and our new program of monthly videos on what is needed to prepare and visit the Park teach grounding outdoor skills. And slowly and patiently, we're connecting more with Maine tribes, learning from them about their history and the knowledge they hold about living lightly.

We might think that we can divide our worlds between what we do when we are in camping mode and the rest of our life. But that's not true; experiences build on each other, giving us a reservoir to draw from.

So get outside — for all the hundreds of reasons that life in nature fills our hearts and fulfills our need for adventure. And be ready — and grateful — to bring what you learned back to our man-made world when things turn topsy-turvy.



Maybe this is due to my confinement to the office, but this winter has felt less like its own season and more like a brief breath between a hell of a year and preparations for another. December and January were largely snowless up here, which delayed much of the winter fun the Katahdin Region has to offer until late January. Even now, our totals for the year are around half of normal, 80" in total, and about 3 feet on the snow stick at Chimney. This didn't stop folks from coming to the Park--especially the places that were easier to access. Daicey Pond reservations for winter were up significantly, in part due to the difficulty of getting deeper into the Park and in part a reflection of an influx of recreationists enjoying the winter season for the first time. While all winter trips carry risk, the five-mile ski to a four-walled cabin with a wood stove at Daicey is often right-sized for those new to winter wilderness recreation.

Inside the Great Basin, typically, access is improved by feet of snow, much of it blown in, which covers up all those giant boulders on the south side of Chimney Pond. Many traditional ice climbing routes haven't iced in at all, and access to the foot of those ice climbs has been a thrash through subalpine fir and spruce in amongst these monster chunks of granite. Run-outs from typical ski routes have been quite bony, and avalanche dangers high due to icy layers of snow to which new falling snow cannot bond.

Were it not for the highly organized Ranger team, we may have missed entirely the window of enough snow and frozen enough conditions to haul materials via snowmobile to Chimney and Russell Ponds. Historically this window has extended for months; this year, we have had a few short days where access to Russell Pond was possible. We are again reminded that our operations that depend on historical climate conditions are tenuous at best, and we must consider our options for adaptation.

This was a trying year due to all the pain



Baxter Peak and the Knife Edge in winter. – Photo courtesy of Baxter State Park

and for the baseline anxiety that many of us have carried as we deal with uncertainty, isolation, and loss. And with these challenges, we've grown, we've learned to cope, we've learned to adapt and find silver linings in global crises. I am continually impressed and amazed by human resilience and the depths from which we can bounce back.

In the Park, we found an opportuni-



Snow covered Abol Pond Trail.

– Photo courtesy of Stephen Wotton

ty in the July season to start to get serious about our efforts to improve fish passage and infrastructure resilience for our dozens of stream crossings draining flashy mountain streams (you'll see two examples on the Roaring Brook Road). We adapted with new protocols for everything from complex search and rescue missions to cleaning out-houses. I'm proud to report that we recorded no known covid transmissions in the Park this past summer, a testament not only to staff and visitor compliance with those protocols but also the leadership that staff demonstrated as they maintained a high level of vigilance. We might have been telling a sadder story if not for their strength

and resilience.

Now the light is lengthening, the case numbers are again falling, vaccines are being administered, and there is a sense of hope and that some sort of normalcy may be on the horizon. This summer will, of course look similar to last in the Park; staff and visitors will wear masks, bunkhouses will continue to be rented on a single party basis, and people will still be seeking respite in the natural world from all the stress and anxiety of a continuing pandemic. We anticipate a busy season as folks yet again find they need the solitude of remote places, the freedom of a roadless wilderness, and the clarity of replacing a wifi connection with a natural and spiritual one.

As you know, the Park is an exceptional place to nurture a connection to nature and feel the relief as birdsong and gentle summer breezes repair frayed nerves and exhausted emotions. Or perhaps your way of reconnecting and recentering yourself is more of a challenge, testing your physical limits and seeking taller peaks, or a bit of type two fun in the form of a long suffer-fest march that

leaves you feeling exhausted and satisfied. Or perhaps braving the bugs to land that lunker from Daicey Pond is your salve. Or maybe simple awareness of the indifference of a vast wilderness, where the birds and beasts are left to exist in their "natural and wild state," gives you comfort that you are but a small part of something much larger. The Park is a place where you can find peace through nature at your own pace, on your own terms, and often, completely alone. How to Baxter is yours for you to decide and pursue, as long as it fits within what Governor Baxter called the "right, unspoiled way."

Wabanaki and K'taadn *continued from pg. 3*

absolute good or absolute evil. Instead, all things are considered fluid.

Although K'taadn had been an integral part of the Wabanaki lives since time immemorial, no Wabanaki had climbed to the peak of the mountain. Whether it was out of fear or out of respect remains debatable. Chances are they did not wish to anger Pamola. In his book, *The Maine Woods*, Henry David Thoreau says about the mountaintops: ".... Only daring and insolent men, perchance, go there. Simple races, as savages, do not climb mountains, their tops are sacred and mysterious tracks never visited by them. Pamola is always angry with those who climb to the summit of K'taadn." Stories have been handed down through the years that "seven Indians" had attempted to ascend to the top of the mountain, only to never be seen again. When the first recorded ascent of the mountain by natives and whites together was accomplished on August 13, 1804, the climbers returned to Indian Island to boast of their accomplishment but to a dubious audience. The Wabanaki were, what we might call today "superstitious," to such a degree that they were barely able to conceive of the news. How did these people manage to climb the mountain? Some believe Pamola only inhabits the mountain in the winter, and flies away in the Spring.

Former Chief of Indian Island, John Neptune confronted Pamola one-on-one, and succeeded. Legend has it, Neptune went up the mountain overnight. He apparently was the only Penobscot brave enough to take on such a feat. It was winter, and Pamola was in residence. Chief Neptune found a cave dwelling in which to sleep. He rolled a rock in front of the entrance, sealing it up with water. The frigid air froze the rock into place. During the night, Pamola confronted the intruder on his mountain. Pamola tried to get into the cave, pounding and whipping wind all night long, but Pamola was unsuccessful. This is the Penobscot story of how Chief John Neptune succeeded in beating Pamola.

Pamola is spoken of as a real person living within the mountain. It is recommended that respect be shown for this sometime destructive wind spirit, or air spirit. With proper respect, it will allow you to climb to the top. Disrespect will get you elsewhere. In 1989, the Penobscots of Penobscot Nation were hosting an intertribal running camp for native youth in the Maine woods. The culmination of the trip was a hike up K'taadn. The youth and counselors all began their mountain climb but were nearly "blown off" by a sudden storm. The month was June and a horizontally blowing slushy rain assaulted the group. The counselors decided to turn the group back down the mountain, but one guest of the running camp, a visiting accomplished runner from the Southwest chose to meet the challenge. He sprinted up the mountain showing off his strength and physical endurance. His actions were described as "dancing across the Knife's Edge." Although he made it down from the mountain, he was warned about his disrespectful intrusion on the mountain. When the Southwestern native returned to his homeland, he experienced a year full of constant injuries, greatly hindering his mobility. This physical condition was highly unusual for this endurance athlete.

This Southwestern native understood the importance of respecting spirit, and the following year, upon his return to Maine, brought tobacco in a pouch to K'taadn. He climbed the mountain, and offered the tobacco to the spirit of the mountain as a peace offering in the hope that his intrusiveness of the previous year would be forgiven.

Part two of this essay will appear in the summer issue of *Forever Wild*.

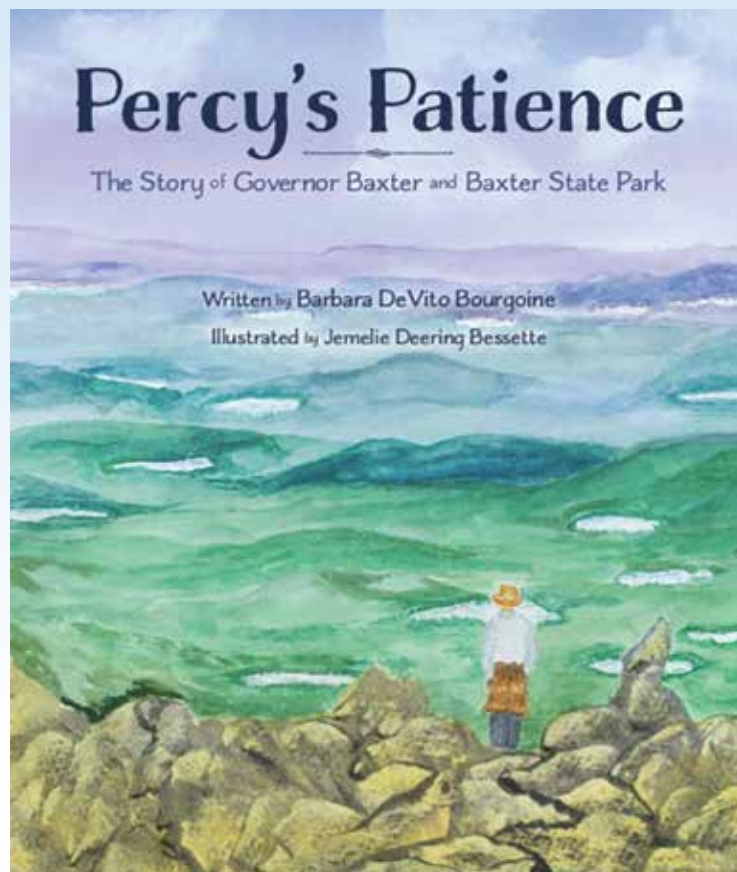
Percy's Patience: The Story of Governor Baxter and Baxter State Park

Book by Barbara DeVito Bourgoine, Review by Cathy Brown

Barbara DeVito Bourgoine, a retired literacy teacher from Readfield, Maine, has a long history of visiting Baxter State Park. Bourgoine has channeled her love for the Park into an amazing children's book called *Percy's Patience: The Story of Governor Baxter and Baxter State Park*. Young Percy Baxter dreamed of a better world and exhibited great perseverance throughout his life. The Park, his great gift to the people of Maine, was a result of his determination and his patience.

A wonderful biography for children as young as six, it can be enjoyed by kids up to sixth grade due to the unique format. Each page is footnoted so that one could choose to read the narrative for its own sake, or slow down to absorb "fun facts." The book includes a timeline, maps, portraits, and references that will intrigue older readers. Delightful illustrations by Jemalie Deering Bessette help to make this book a very special tribute to Governor Percival Baxter.

Percy's Patience: The Story of Governor Baxter and Baxter State Park is an ideal way to share the story of Baxter State Park with your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and any other kids in your life! It is now available at www.friendsofbaxterorg/store.



Percy's Patience: The Story of Governor Baxter and Baxter State Park

Baxter State Park Trivia

What common backyard bird species and its more northern relative both occur in Baxter State Park?"

Spring Birding in Baxter State Park

By Garrett Erickson-Harris, FBSP Conservation Intern

Punxsutawney Phil emerges from his den each year, attracting the attention of many. On February 2nd, 2021, at 7:30 AM, he caught sight of his shadow forecasting another six weeks of winter. While this is disappointing news for many, we do have some springtime activities to look forward to at Baxter State Park. Birding is rich year-round, but spring is especially exciting.

You can expect to see the first migrating birds arrive in March. One of the earliest arriving birds is the American Woodcock. You can find them in wet fields just before sundown, spiraling into the sky in a spectacular display before returning to their starting point to let out their signature "peent!" Other birds of note that arrive in March are Purple Finches and American Goldfinches.

April is a slower month in terms of arrivals, though there are a few new faces to anticipate. A return of the first couple of Eastern Phoebes will fill the air with songs that strike summer-time nostalgia. However, the majority of Phoebes will arrive later in May. An extraordinarily unique sparrow of Maine will also appear in this month, the Dark-Eyed Junco.

May is the most popular month for spring birding, and rightfully so. The majority of migrating birds arrive this month. It can be overwhelming to decide which birds to pursue. You could follow two strategies: go for a walk in a place that you like and see which kinds of birds you happen upon, or begin with the birds of interest and seek them out. Each strategy has its own benefits and drawbacks, but remember to keep an open mind for anything to unexpectedly pop out on a tree limb.

Some of the first birds to arrive in May are flycatchers, like the Least Flycatcher. These active birds are exciting to watch as they perform acrobatic feats in pursuit of flying insects. The Winter Wren is in a class of its own, though you are more likely to hear its long, bubbly song filling the soundscape than you are to catch a glimpse.

Perhaps the most sought-after group of spring birds are wood warblers. The first to arrive are the flashy American Redstarts and the quirky Black-and-White Warbler. Other favorites to search for are Cape May Warblers, Magnolia Warblers, Blackburnian Warblers, and the ever-so-impressive Blackpoll Warblers. The composition of this group will vary with different habitats. Deciduous trees often present Chestnut-Sided Warblers and Yellow Warblers. Similarly, Bay-Breasted Warblers and Tennessee Warblers can be found in coniferous trees. While you may be lucky enough to get a Common Yellowthroat at eye-level, most likely, you will need to scrutinize the canopy for warbler movements before you raise up your binoculars. Spring is an excellent opportunity to see some amazing birds that only pass through Baxter State Park quickly. Getting outside and exploring is the key to turning up something that you find interesting. To tide you over for now, keep an eye out for White-Winged and Red Crossbills and other winter finches like Pine Grosbeaks and Evening Grosbeaks.

Garrett Erickson-Harris is a senior at Kennebunk High School in Kennebunk, Maine. He is volunteering as a Conservation Intern with Friends of Baxter State Park for the 2020 - 2021 school year, and will be a participant in the 2021 Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program.

Baxter State Park Spring Birding Checklist

By Garrett Erickson-Harris

March

- American Woodcock
- Golden-Crowned Kinglet
- Purple Finch
- American Goldfinch

April

- First few Eastern Phoebes (most arrive in May)
- Dark-Eyed Junco

May

- Common Loon
- Winter Wren

Ducks

- Ring-Necked Duck
- Common Goldeneye
- Hooded Merganser
- Common Merganser

Hawks

- Red-Tailed Hawk
- Red-Shouldered Hawk
- Broad-Winged Hawk

Flycatchers

- Olive-Sided Flycatcher
- Eastern Wood-Pewee
- Yellow-Bellied Flycatcher
- Alder Flycatcher
- Least Flycatcher (first to arrive)
- Eastern Phoebe

Vireos

- Blue-Headed Vireo
- Red-Eyed Vireo

Thrushes

- Wood Thrush
- Hermit Thrush
- Swainson's Thrush

Sparrows

- Chipping Sparrow
- Fox Sparrow
- White-Throated Sparrow
- Savannah Sparrow
- Song Sparrow
- Swamp Sparrow

Warblers

- Ovenbird
- Northern Waterthrush
- Black-and-White Warbler
- Tennessee Warbler
- Nashville Warbler
- Common Yellowthroat
- American Redstart (often first to arrive)
- Northern Parula
- Magnolia Warbler
- Bay-Breasted Warbler
- Blackburnian Warbler
- Yellow Warbler
- Chestnut-Sided Warbler
- Blackpoll Warbler
- Black-Throated Blue Warbler
- Pine Warbler
- Yellow-Rumped Warbler
- Black-Throated Green Warbler
- Canada Warbler



The Northern Parula, seen here singing from a treetop perch in Baxter State Park, can be identified by its chestnut breast-band and ascending buzzed song... - Photo © Dave Kourtz



Friends of Baxter State Park

PO Box 322

Belfast, ME 04915

Visit us at www.friendsofbaxter.org

Email us at info@friendsofbaxter.org



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We're looking for new Friends!

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Please make checks payable to Friends of Baxter State Park, or join online. Dues and contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

Send to:

Friends of Baxter State Park
PO Box 322
Belfast, ME 04915

Thank you!

2021 Annual Meeting on April 7

The 2021 Annual Meeting of Friends of Baxter State Park is scheduled for the evening of Wednesday, April 7, 2021. We invite you to join us via Zoom from 6:00 - 7:30 pm for updates on Friends, the latest news from the Park, guest speakers, beautiful photography, and more. We look forward to being able to gather in person again soon – hopefully later this year – but until then, we have planned a lively and engaging event that will allow us to meet safely. Advance registration is required. Please visit www.friendsofbaxter.org/rsvp for more details and to sign up. As always, please let us know if you have any questions. We hope to see you there!